

SPEECHES

DELIVERED BY SEVERAL

INDIAN CHIEFS.

ALSO,

AN EXTRACT OF A LETTER

FROM

AN INDIAN CHIEF.



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Having lately met with a small Tract from America containing the Speeches of some of the Indian Tribes on different occasions, I think it desirable they should be more generally known. That reported by the Sweedish Missionary having passed two translations, has thereby lost somewhat of the native Indian simplicity, it however retains too much of the Comprehensive Idea of the Indian, as well as too much valuable instruction to be omitted. I believe beyond a doubt that all Mankind wherever situated and however circumstanced assuredly partake of the consequences of the Fall, though they should never have heard of Adam; and on the other hand through the Mercy and Justice of God, not a single individual of Adam's Race the World over is left without a Witness for him in the Heart, and though they may never have heard of the name of Christ, they partake of the benefit of his offering and sacrifice for the redemption of Mankind; and if they are faithful to the Light of Christ which it is said "Lighteth every Man that cometh into the World" it will not only discover evil from Good and Good from Evil, but will incline to the Good, and thus prove saving to the Soul; and that in the World to come such will have a portion of happiness, consistent with the Wisdom of God, and the degree of knowledge so afforded of himself.

THE EDITOR.

INDIAN SPEECHES,

DELIVERED BY

Farmer's Brother, & Red Jacket,

TWO SENECA CHIEFS.

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The following Speeches of Farmer's Brother and Red Jacket, two of the Seneca Chiefs, communicated for publication in the *Ontario Repository*, have been thought worth preserving in the form of a pamphlet. The gentleman who furnished them to the Editor, prefaced them with observing, "The speech of Farmer's Brother is an interesting specimen of boldness of figure; and in one expression, Longinus would have given him credit for the true sublime: 'The Great Spirit spoke to the whirlwind, and it was still.'

"The speech of Red Jacket, I think, discovers the same beauties of imagery, united with shrewdness of remark, and an extent of information, far, beyond what we should have expected to find in the wandering tribes of Indians. I confess that, in perusing this speech, I felt humbled in the view of myself, considering the superior advantages I had enjoyed from childhood, to those granted to this man of the woods.

"You may rely on the correctness of the speeches, as delivered by the Chiefs mentioned. I received Red Jacket's from a gentleman who was present when it was delivered, and wrote it sentence by sentence, as translated at the time, by the interpreter."

SPEECH

OF

FARMER'S BROTHER.

The following speech was delivered in a public council at Genesee river, Nov. 21, 1798 by HO-NA-YA-WUS, commonly called Farmer's Brother; and, after being written as interpreted, it was signed by the principal chiefs present, and sent to the legislature of the state of New-York.

“THE sachems, chiefs and warriors, of the Seneca nation, to the sachems and chiefs assembled about the great council fire of the state of New-York.

“*Brothers*—As you are once more assembled in council for the purpose of doing honour to yourselves, and justice to your country; we, your brothers, the sachems, chiefs, and warriors of the Seneca nation, request you to open your ears and give attention to our voice and wishes.

*“Brothers—*You will recollect the late contest between you and your father, the great king of England. This contest threw the inhabitants of this whole island into a great tumult and commotion, like a raging whirlwind which tears up the trees, and tosses to and fro the leaves, so that no one knows from whence they come, or where they will fall.

*“Brothers—*This whirlwind was so directed by the Great Spirit above, as to throw into our arms two of your infant children, Jasper Parrish, and Horatio Jones. We adopted them into our families and made them our children. We loved them and nourished them. They lived with us many years. At length, the Great Spirit spoke to the whirlwind, and it was still. A clear and uninterrupted sky appeared. The path of peace was opened, and the chain of friendship was once more made bright. Then these our adopted children left us, to seek their relations. We wished them to remain among us, and promised, if they would return and live in our country, to give each of them a seat of land for them and their children to sit down upon.

*“Brothers—*They have returned, and have, for several years past, been serviceable to us as inter-

preters. We still feel our hearts beat with affection for them, and now wish to fulfil the promise we made them, and to reward them for their services. We have, therefore, made up our minds to give them a seat of two square miles of land, lying on the outlet of Lake Erie, about three miles below Black Rock, beginning at the mouth of a creek known by the name of Scoy-gu-quoy-des creek, running one mile from the river Niagara, up said creek, thence northerly, as the river runs, two miles; thence westerly one mile, to the river; thence up the river, as the river runs, two miles, to the place of beginning, so as to contain two square miles.

“*Brothers*—We have now made known to you our minds. We expect, and earnestly request, that you will permit our friends to receive this our gift, and will make the same good to them, according to the laws and customs of your nation.

“*Brothers*—Why should you hesitate to make our minds easy with regard to this our request? To you it is but a little thing, and have you not complied with the request, and confirmed the gift of our brothers the Oneidas, the Onondagas, and Cayugas, to their interpreters? And shall we ask and not be heard?

“Brothers—We send you this our speech, to which we expect your answer before the breaking up of your great council fire”

Speech of Red Jacket.

In the summer of 1805, a number of the principal chiefs and warriors of the Six Nations, principally Senecas, assembled at Buffalo Creek, in the state of New-York, at the particular request of the Rev. Mr. Cram, a missionary from the state of Massachusetts. The missionary being furnished with an interpreter, and accompanied by the agent of the United States for Indian affairs, met the Indians in council, when the following talk took place.

FIRST, BY THE AGENT.

“Brothers of the Six Nations—I rejoice to meet you at this time, and thank the Great Spirit that he has preserved you in health, and given me another opportunity of taking you by the hand.

“Brothers—The person who sits by me, is a

friend who has come a great distance to hold a talk with you. He will inform you what his business is, and it is my request that you would listen with attention to his words."

MISSIONARY.

"My Friends—I am thankful for the opportunity afforded us of uniting together at this time. I had a great desire to see you, and inquire into your state and welfare, for this purpose I have travelled a great distance, being sent by your old friends, the Boston Missionary Society. You will recollect they formerly sent missionaries among you, to instruct you in religion, and labour for your good. Although they have not heard from you for a long time, yet they have not forgotten their brothers, the Six Nations, and are still anxious to do you good.

"Brothers—I have not come to get your lands or your money, but to enlighten your minds, and to instruct you how to worship the great Spirit agreeably to his mind and will, and to preach to you the gospel of his son Jesus Christ. There is but one religion, and but one way to serve God, and if you do not embrace the right way, you cannot be happy hereafter. You have never worshipped the great Spirit in a manner accepta-

ble to him ; but have, all your lives, been in great errors and darkness. To endeavour to remove these errors, and open your eyes, so that you might see clearly, is my business with you.

*“Brothers—*I wish to talk with you as one friend talks with another ; and, if you have any objections to receive the religion which I preach, I wish you to state them ; and I will endeavour to satisfy your minds, and remove the objections.

*“Brothers—*I want you to speak your minds freely ; for I wish to reason with you on the subject, and, if possible, remove all doubts, if there be any on your minds. The subject is an important one, and it is of consequence that you give it an early attention while the offer is made you. Your friends, the Boston Missionary Society, will continue to send you good and faithful ministers, to instruct and strengthen you in religion, if, on your part, you are willing to receive them.

*“Brothers—*Since I have been in this part of the country, I have visited some of your small villages, and talked with your people. They appear willing to receive instruction, but, as they look up to you as their older brothers in council, they want first to know your opinion on the subject.

“You have now heard what I have to propose at present. I hope you will take it into consideration, and give me an answer before we part.”

After about two hours consultation among themselves, the chief, commonly called, by the white people, Red Jacket, (whose Indian name is Sagu-yu-what-hah, which, interpreted, is Keeper-awake) rose and spoke as follows:

“*Friend and Brother*—It was the will of the great Spirit, that we should meet together this day, He orders all things, and has given us a fine day for our council. He has taken his garment from before the sun, and caused it to shine with brightness upon us. Our eyes are opened, that we see clearly; our ears are unstopped, that we have been able to hear distinctly the words you have spoken. For all these favours we thank the great Spirit, and Him only.

“*Brother*—This council fire was kindled by you. It was at your request that we came together at this time. We have listened with attention to what you have said. You requested us to speak our minds freely. This gives us great joy; for we now consider that we stand upright before you, and can speak what we think. All

have heard your voice, and all speak to you now as one man. Our minds are agreed.

*“Brother—*You say you want an answer to your talk before you leave this place. It is right you should have one, as you are a great distance from home, and we do not wish to detain you. But we will first look back a little, and tell you what our fathers have told us, and what we have heard from the white people.

*“Brother—*Listen to what we say.

“There was a time when our forefathers owned this great island. Their seats extended from the rising to the setting sun. The great Spirit had made it for the use of Indians. He had created the buffalo, the deer, and other animals, for food. He had made the bear and the beaver. Their skins served us for clothing. He had scattered them over the country, and taught us how to take them. He had caused the earth to produce corn for bread. All this He had done for his red children, because he loved them. If we had some disputes about our hunting ground, they were generally settled without the shedding of much blood. But an evil day came upon us. Your forefathers crossed the great water, and landed on this island. Their numbers were small. They

found friends and not enemies. They told us they had fled from their own country for fear of wicked men, and had come here to enjoy their religion. They asked for a small seat. We took pity on them, granted their request, and they sat down amongst us. We gave them corn and meat; they gave us poison (alluding, it is supposed, to ardent spirits) in return.

“The white people had now found our country. Tidings were carried back, and more came amongst us. Yet we did not fear them. We took them to be friends. They called us brothers. We believed them, and gave them a larger seat. At length, their numbers had greatly increased. They wanted more land; they wanted our country. Our eyes were opened, and our minds became uneasy. Wars took place. Indians were hired to fight against Indians, and many of our people were destroyed. They also brought strong liquor amongst us. It was strong and powerful, and has slain thousands.

“*Brother*—Our seats were once large and yours were small. You have now become a great people, and we have scarcely a place left to spread our blankets. You have got our country,

but are not satisfied; you want to force your religion upon us.

“Brother—Continue to listen.

“You say that you are sent to instruct us how to worship the great Spirit agreeably to his mind, and, if we do not take hold of the religion which you white people teach, we shall be unhappy hereafter. You say that you are right and we are lost. How do we know this to be true. We understand that your religion is written in a book. If it was intended for us as well as you, why has not the great Spirit given to us, and not only to us, but why did he not give to our forefathers, the knowledge of that book, with the means of understanding it rightly? We only know what you tell us about it. How shall we know when to believe, being so often deceived by the white people?

“Brother—You say there is but one way to worship and serve the great Spirit. If there is but one religion, why do you white people differ so much about it? Why not all agree, as you can all read the book?

“Brother—We do not understand these things.

“We are told that your religion was given to your forefathers, and has been handed down from

father to son. We also have a religion, which was given to our forefathers, and has been handed down to us, their children. We worship in that way. It teaches us to be thankful for all the favours we receive; to love each other, and to be united. We never quarrel about our religion.

*“Brother—*The great Spirit has made us all, but he has made a great difference between his white and red children. He has given us different complexions and different customs. To you he has given the arts. To these he has not opened our eyes. We know these things to be true. Since he has made so great a difference between us in other things, why may we not conclude that he has given us a different religion, according to our understanding? The great Spirit does right. He knows what is best for his children; we are satisfied.

*“Brother—*We are told that you have been preaching to the white people in this place. These people are our neighbours. We are acquainted with them. We will wait a little while, and see what effect your speaking has upon them. If we find it does them good, makes them honest, and less disposed to cheat Indians, we will then con-

sider again of what you have said.

“*Brother*—You have now heard our answer to your talk, and this is all we have to say at present.

“As we are going to part, we will come and take you by the hand, and hope the great Spirit will protect you on your journey, and return you safe to your friends.”

The preceding Speeches were taken from a pamphlet, printed by James D. Bemis, at Canandaigua, in the year 1809. The two following are extracted from a pamphlet, printed by Daniel Lawrence, at Stanford, N. Y.

IN or about the year of our Lord, 1710, a Swedish Missionary preached a sermon at an Indian treaty, held at Contestogo; in which sermon he set forth original sin, the necessity of a mediator, and endeavoured, by certain arguments, to induce the Indians to embrace the christian religion. After he had ended his discourse, one of the Indian chiefs made a speech, in reply to the sermon: the discourse on both sides was made known by interpreters. The missionary, upon his return to Sweden, published his sermon, and the Indian's answer, in Latin. He dedicated them to

the university at Upsal, and desired them to furnish him with arguments to confute such strong reasonings of the Indians.

The Indian's speech, translated from the Latin, is as followeth.— “Since the subject of his errand is to persauade us to embrace new doctrines, perhaps it may not be amiss, before we offer him the reasons why we cannot comply with his request, to acquaint him of the grounds and principles of that religion he would have us to abandon.

“Our fathers were under a strong persuasion (as we are) that those who act well in this life, will be rewarded in the next, according to the degree of their virtues; and, on the other hand, that those who behave wickedly here, will undergo such punishments hereafter, as are proportionate to the crimes they were guilty of, This has been constantly and invariably received and acknowledged for a truth, through every successive generation of our ancestors; it could not, then, have taken its rise from fable: for, human fiction, however artfully and plausibly contrived, can never gain credit long among people where free inquiry is allowed, which was never denied by our ancestors, who, on the contrary, thought it the sacred, inviolable, natural right of every

man, to examine and judge for himself: therefore, we think it evident, that our notions of future rewards and punishments, were either revealed immediately from heaven, to some of our forefathers, and from them descended to us, or that it was implanted in each of us at our creation, by the Creator of all things, Whatever the method might have been, whereby God has been pleased to make known unto us his will, and give us a knowledge of our duty, it is, in our sense, a divine revelation.

“Now, we desire to propose to him some questions. Does he believe our forefathers, men eminent for their piety, constant and warm in the pursuit of virtue, hoping thereby to obtain eternal happiness, were all damned? Does he think that we, who are zealous imitators of them in good works, and influenced by the same motives as they were, earnestly endeavouring, with the greatest circumspection, to tread the paths of integrity, are in a state of damnation? If these be his sentiments, they are surely as impious, as they are are bold and daring.

“In the next place, we beg that he would explain himself more particularly concerning revelation. If he admits of none but what is contained

in his written book, the contrary is evident from what has been shewn before. But if he says God has revealed himself to us, but not sufficient for our salvation, then we ask, to what purpose should he have revealed himself to us in any wise? It is clear, that a revelation insufficient to save, cannot put us in a better condition than we should be without a revelation at all. We cannot conceive that God should point out the end we ought to arrive at, without opening to us the way to arrive at that end. But supposing our understanding were so far illuminated, as to know it to be our duty to please God, who has yet left us under an incapacity of doing it; will this missionary, therefore, conclude, that we shall be eternally damned? Will he take upon him to pronounce damnation upon us, for not doing those things which he himself acknowledges were impossible by us to be done? It is our opinion, that every man is possessed with sufficient knowledge for his own salvation.

“The Almighty, for any thing we know, may have communicated himself to different races of people in a different manner. Some say they have the will of God in writing: be it so; their revelation has no advantage above ours, since both are equally sufficient to save, or the end of the

revelation would be frustrated; besides, if both be true, they must be the same in substance, and the difference can only lay in the mode of communication.

“He tells us, there are many precepts in this written revelation, which we are entirely ignorant of. But, as those written commands could only be necessary for those who have the writings, they cannot possibly regard us. Had the Almighty thought so much knowledge necessary for our salvation, his goodness could not so long have deferred the communication of it to us. And to say, in a matter so necessary, he could not at one and the same time reveal himself to all mankind, is nothing less than a denial of his omnipotence. Without doubt, he can make his will manifest without the help of any book, or the assistance of any bookish man whatever.

“We shall, in the next place, consider the arguments that arise from the consideration of providence.

“If we be the work of God, (which we presume will not be denied) it follows from thence we are under the care and protection of God; for it cannot be supposed, that the Deity should abandon his own creatures, and be utterly regardless

of their welfare: and to say the Almighty has permitted us to remain in a fatal error, through so many ages, is to represent him as a tyrant. How is it consistent with his justice, to force life upon a race of mortals without their consent, and then to damn them eternally, without ever opening to them the door of salvation. Our conceptions of the gracious God, are much more noble; and we think that those who teach otherwise, do little less than blaspheme.

“Again, it is through the care and goodness of the Almighty, that from the beginning of time, through so many generations to this day, our name has been preserved unblotted out, and by our enemies unreduced to nothing. By the same care we now enjoy our lives, and are furnished with the necessary means of preserving these lives; but all these things are trifling, compared with our salvation. Therefore, since God has been so careful of us in matters of so little consequence, it would be absurd to affirm, that he has neglected us in cases of the greatest importance; admit he has forsaken us, yet it could not be without a just cause.

“Let us suppose, that some heinous crimes were committed by some of our ancestors, like to

that we are told of among another race of people; in such a case, God would certainly punish the criminal, but never involve us that are innocent in the guilt; those who think otherwise, must make the Almighty a very whimsical, ill-natured being.

“Once more: are the christians virtuous? or rather, are they not more vicious than we are; If so, how comes it to pass that they are the objects of God’s beneficence, while we are neglected? does he daily confer his favours without reason, and with so much partiality?

“In a word, we find the christians much more depraved in their morals than we are; and we judge of their doctrine, by the badness of their lives.”

Observations of a Tuscarora Chief.

A Missionary among the Indians, had been urging the necessity of a civilized life; and concluded with saying, “they must now set out in a new path, or they would be a ruined people.” The chief, being a very sensible, observing man, said, “I see the necessity of it; I feel I am a poor, weak creature. When I am in my hunting walks, I often cry to the great Spirit for his protection. Also, when I am called to make a public speech, I look to

the same Spirit for wisdom. I see our hunting is almost gone; we must try to follow the path of white people, whom God manifestly blesses. We are like children, as to getting our living by labour. I hope if white people love us, they will help us, and teach us how to live."

Extract of a letter from Capt. Hendricks, an Indian chief, of the Stockbridge nation, to Col. Pickering, one of the commissioners appointed by the president of the United States, for holding a treaty with the Six Nations, at Canandaigua, in the fall, 1794.

"There is a powerful, strong man, that has long made war against all the nations of Indians, and made dreadful havoc amongst them. He has also attacked our nation, and cut off almost all our young men and warriors; and many of our old men have been slain by him. This strong man, our enemy, is named RUM! and he is your son, and begat by the white people, and we believe you have power to control him; we, therefore, hope you will chain him down, and confine him among yourselves, and never let him again loose among us poor Indians."

FINIS.

